



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
February 13, 2008

CONTACT: Brenda Jones
202-226-4673

Rep. John Lewis Demands Thorough Investigation Of Tainted Beef Sent to Georgia Schools

Rep. John Lewis wants a complete investigation of Humane Society report that a California slaughterhouse may have distributed tainted beef to U.S. schools. A shocking video investigation revealed animals so ill they were unable to walk being prodded with a forklift to be slaughtered for human consumption. These animals could be infected with mad cow disease or other illnesses known to cause human fatalities if eaten. Twenty-four school districts in Georgia receive beef from the Hallmark/Westland meat source, including Fulton and DeKalb counties.

Rep. Lewis, also a cosponsor of H.R. 661, the Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act, signed a strongly worded letter to the Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Schafer demanding a full, intensive investigation into the procedures and federal laws that would sanction this kind of activity. The letter states,

“We call on USDA to immediately undertake a prompt and systematic investigation of the abuses which occurred at the Hallmark plant; of the weaknesses in the USDA's rule implementation and administration which allowed the practices to go unnoticed, and of the current practices and safeguards in effect at the largest beef processing plants across the United States. Congress and the American people need to know urgently the extent to which downed cattle are still being passed into the food supply. Finally, we urge you to take the strongest possible disciplinary actions against any company or plant that is found to be in violation of USDA's July 13, 2007, rule regarding downed cattle. We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to your prompt reply detailing the actions USDA will be taking in response to the discoveries at the Hallmark plant in Chino.”

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